Teaching teens to "Get Net Smart for Good Health": comparing interventions for an Internet training program

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APPENDIX B

Hands On Health - SC website evaluation

Website URL:		
Desired qualities of a website	**Rate***	**Yes/No/Comments**
1. Site is sponsored by a respected, reliable, and unbiased source.		
2. Writers are qualified in a relevant field.		
3. Information is up-to-date and accurate.		
4. Site has adequate privacy protection.		
5. Site has been reviewed and approved by professionals.		
6. Contact information provides ties to a responsible person.		

* Rate using a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

General comments: _____

Hands on health website evaluation guidelines

Please keep in mind that these guidelines provide general guidance when evaluating a website for reliability and quality. No website can or should meet all these criteria.

Desired qualities of a website	**Indicators**
1. Site is sponsored by respected, reliable, and unbiased source.	Sponsored by government agency (.gov), university or academic institution (.edu), an established professional organization (.org or .net), or a reputable commercial organization (.com) that is not primarily intended to sell products or give slanted opinions.

2. Writers are qualified in a relevant field.	Credentials are readily apparent and are meaningful indicators. For example, a scientist can write with authority on a new and complicated biological process. A journalist writing on the same topic needs to cite a scientist with the appropriate credentials.
3. Information is up to date and accurate.	- Clearly depicts who provides medical advice: qualified practitioners or lay people/peers. - Provides a fair and balanced presentation including controversial issues and alternatives. - Coverage of topics is helpful: typical questions are answered (descriptions, symptoms, therapies, etc.). - Does not make claims of therapeutic benefit without reasonable support and does not provide false or misleading information. There are supporting citations/references. - Dates are easy to find and indicate that the site is regularly maintained. Easy to determine currency of content: dates of creation, last review, latest revision. In the case of current research, dates should be within the last year.
4. Site has adequate privacy protection.	- Warns against using online medical advice to replace personal health visits. - States clearly whether personal information is collected, maintained, and used by site - Users can choose to opt in for personal health information/tracking prior to data collection. - Has privacy policies to safeguard personal or financial data, if appropriate.
5. Site has been reviewed and approved by professionals.	- Editorial policy is stated or names and credentials of reviewers are listed and easy to find. - Seals of approval are reputable and relevant (an award for website design does not ensure that health information is valid).
6. Contact information provides ties to a responsible person.	- Name, credentials, affiliation, email address, and phone number given for a contact person. - Information is easy to find on the home page or at a recognizable link ("about us" or "welcome" are examples).

Additional pointers:

Site is easily navigated.	- Loads quickly and leads directly to relevant links. Users do not have to hit several links to answer question. - Easy to move through without getting lost. - Has a table of contents (site map). - Has an internal Search feature.
Information is suitable for intended audience.	- Clearly written and easy to understand. - Medical terms defined or explained. - Simple vocabulary, short sentences, bullets.

	▪ Sites for ethnic/cultural/disabled groups address topics using appropriate terminology.
Site is accessible.	▪ Most information is free.
	▪ Fee based services are obvious.
	▪ Site accommodates the disabled:
	– Vision impaired
	– Deaf
	– Motor impaired
	– Other

The following clearinghouses or index sites may be helpful in your evaluation of the site being reviewed:

- MedWeb <http://www.medweb.emory.edu/MedWeb/>
- MedHunt <http://www.hon.ch/MedHunt/>